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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography of materials in the ERIC database contains 30 annotations (dating from 1974 to 1989) on informal reading inventories (IRIs). The citations were selected to help professionals understand the history of, the uses of, and the issues surrounding IRIs. The major sections of the bibliography are: Overview, General Uses, Critiques and Issues, Validity and Reliability Research, and Special Populations. (MS)

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Informal Reading Inventories

by Jerry Johns and Peggy VanLeirsburg

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Informal reading inventories (IRIs) have been used for nearly half a century to help assess students' reading. Thus, the ERIC database contains numerous citations relating to IRIs. The citations in this *FAST Bib* were selected specifically to help professionals understand the history of, the uses of, and the issues surrounding IRIs. The major sections of this bibliography are: Overview, General Uses, Critiques and Issues, Validity and Reliability Research, and Special Populations. Abstracts for some of the items cited here have been abbreviated to allow for the inclusion of additional citations.

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Overview

Demos, E. S. "Evaluation/Testing Procedures in Reading," *Reading Horizons*, v27 n4 p254-60 Sum 1987.

Discusses the evaluation and testing procedures schools use to evaluate and test reading achievement. Identifies three major categories of tests: achievement/survey, diagnostic, and IRIs.

Henk, William A. "Reading Assessments of the Future: Toward Precision Diagnosis," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n9 p860-70 May 1987.

Concludes that standard reading inventories may be made more useful by modifying them to assess the specific abilities and needs of disabled readers. Offers suggestions for making modifications.

Johns, Jerry L.; Lunn, Mary K. "The Informal Reading Inventory: 1910-1980," *Reading World*, v23 n1 p9-19 Oct 1983.

Traces the origin and development of the IRI and discusses its future as an assessment tool.

Johnson, Marjorie Seddon; and others. *Informal Reading Inventories*, second edition. Reading Aids Series, IRA Service Bulletin. International Reading Association, Newark, DE.

1987. 164p. [ED 277 993; for the first edition, see ED 072 437]

Presents a comprehensive description of the use of IRIs and provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction. Argues that the best IRIs evaluate reading through procedures that are as close as possible to natural reading activities and that there should be a close fit between assessment and instructional materials.

Pumfrey, Peter D. *Reading: Tests and Assessment Techniques*, second edition. United Kingdom Reading Association Teaching of Reading Monograph Series. International Reading Association, Newark, DE. 1985. 354p. [ED 298 448]

Describes various types of reading tests and assessment techniques. Outlines a strategy for selecting instruments. Includes a chapter on IRIs and oral miscue analysis. Concludes with an annotated bibliography of recent publications on the identification and alleviation of reading difficulties.

Searls, Evelyn F. "What's the Value of an IRI? Is It Being Used?" *Reading Horizons*, v28 n2 p92-101 Win 1988.

Reports on a survey which indicates that classroom teachers rarely use the Informal Reading Inventory. Suggests that teacher trainers focus on other more efficient means of obtaining reading diagnosis.

Walter, Richard B. "History and Development of the Informal Reading Inventory." 1974. 18p. [ED 098 539]

Presents the history of the IRI and the problems of validity, reliability, and the selection of performance criteria. Discusses the value of IRIs for determining the instructional level of students. Concludes with selected literature that supports the contention that most teachers cannot be successful in using the IRI without training in construction, administration, and interpretation of such an instrument.

General Uses

Bader, Lois A.; Wiesendanger, Katherine D. "Realizing the Potential of Informal Reading Inventories," *Journal of Reading*, v32 n5 p402-08 Feb 1989.

Discusses the use of IRIs in evaluating reading performance. Notes that although the IRI provides an in-depth evaluation of reading behavior, it should be used in conjunction with other information to assess reading ability.

Blanchard, Jay; Johns, Jerry. "Informal Reading Inventories—A Broader View," *Reading Psychology*, v7 n3 piii-vii 1986.

Concludes that IRIs can be useful, flexible assessment and instruction tools in the hands of knowledgeable teachers. Offers suggestions for their use.

Harris, Larry A.; Lalik, Rosary M. "Teachers' Use of Informal Reading Inventories: An Example of School Constraints," *Reading Teacher*, v40 n7 p624-30 Mar 1987.

Reports on what started out to be a survey of the use of IRIs by teachers that revealed the technique to be embedded in a complex environment. Concludes that the use of IRIs and other diagnostic methods can be limited when teachers do not have primary responsibility for making placement decisions.

Kress, Roy. "Some Caveats When Applying Two Trends in Diagnosis: Remedial Reading." Eric Digest Number 6. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN. 1988. 3p. [ED 297 303]

Examines the use of IRIs for student placement in reading groups and the use of computerized diagnosis and its limitations. Encourages careful use to minimize limitations.

Masztal, Nancy B.; Smith, Lawrence L. "Do Teachers Really Administer IRIs?" *Reading World*, v24 n1 p80-83 Oct 1984.

Concludes that most elementary school teachers surveyed were familiar with IRIs and knew how to administer them.

Critiques and Issues

Caldwell, JoAnne. "A New Look at the Old Informal Reading Inventory," *Reading Teacher*, v39 n2 p168-73 Nov 1985.

Indicates that the format and use of the IRI need to be modified in order to address recent research findings of schema theory, text analysis, and metacognition.

Cardarelli, Aldo F. "The Influence of Reinspection on Students' IRI Results," *Reading Teacher*, v41 n7 p664-67 Mar 1988.

Claims that in the conventional administration of the IRI comprehension diagnosis is inordinately influenced by the reader's ability to recall information. Suggests that allowing reinspection by the reader restores recall to its proper function and may result in other advantages.

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A.; Duffelmeyer, Barbara Blakely. "Main Idea Questions on Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Teacher,* v41 n2 p162-66 Nov 1987.

Considers whether comprehension questions that claim to assess students' skills in finding main ideas may in fact be measuring their knowledge of identifying the passage topic.

Gillis, M. K.; Olson, Mary W. "Elementary IRIs: Do They Reflect What We Know about Text Type/Structure and Comprehension?" *Reading Research and Instruction*, v27 n1 p36-44 Fall 1987.

Analyzes four IRIs to determine the text type of each passage, whether narrative passages are well formed, and whether expository passages are well organized. Finds almost half the narratives poorly formed. Concludes that the lack of continuity in text type and organization could result in students' comprehension scores being erratic and invalid.

Warren, Thomas S. "Informal Reading Inventories—A New Format." Paper presented at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, 1985. 11p. [ED 269 740]

Discusses weaknesses in both published and teacher-made IRIs. Suggests using the Fry readability formula. Introduces teachers to a new format for published inventories.

Validity and Reliability Research

Anderson, Betty. "A Report on IRI Scoring and Interpretation." Paper presented at the 31st Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, 1986. 12p. [ED 271 725]

Examines what oral reading accuracy level is most appropriate for the instructional level and whether repetitions should count as oral reading errors. Includes tables indicating word recognition accuracy at each level of an IRI and percentage of oral reading accuracy with and without repetitions.

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A.; Duffelmeyer, Barbara Blakely. "Are IRI Passages Suitable for Assessing Main Idea Comprehension?" *Reading Teacher*, v42 n6 p358-63 Feb 1989.

Discusses characteristics reading passages must have if they are to be used for main idea assessment. Analyzes each grade one to grade six passage on the Analytical Reading Inventory, Basic Reading Inventory, and Informal Reading Inventory, measuring suitability for use in main idea assessment. Finds many passages are unsuitable.

Fuchs, Lynn S.; and others. "The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n2 p20-28 Mar-Apr 1988.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures (question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques) with 70 mildly and moderately retarded middle and junior high school boys. Finds that correct oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity.

Helgren-Lempesis, Valerie A.; Mangrum, Charles T., II. "An Analysis of Alternate-Form Reliability of Three Commercially-Prepared Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Research Quarterly*, v21 n2 p209-15 Spr 1986.

Examines the interclass and intraclass reliability of three published IRIs and their alternate forms and concludes that though acceptable, the reliabilities of the inventories suggest the need for cautious interpretation.

Homan, Susan P.; Klesius, Janell P. "A Re-Examination of the IRI: Word Recognition Criteria," *Reading Horizons*, v26 n1 p54-61 Fall 1985.

Confirms previous findings that the word recognition criterion for instructional reading level on IRIs should be set at about 95% for students reading at grade levels one through six.

Joels, Rosie Webb; Anderson, Betty. "Informal Reading Inventory Comprehension Questions: Are Classification Schemes Valid?" *Reading Horizons*, v28 n3 p178-83 Spr 1988.

Presents a study which examines elementary school students' performance on the JAT (Joels, Anderson, and Thompson) Reading Inventory, noting variable student performance on the differ-

ent question types. Reports that the validity of the JAT as a diagnostic instrument is established.

Newcomer, Phyllis L. "A Comparison of Two Published Reading Inventories," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v6 n1 p31-36, Jan-Feb 1985.

Studies the extent to which two commercially published IRIs that identify the same instructional level when administered to 50 children in grades one through seven demonstrate a significant lack of congruence between the instruments, particularly at the intermediate grade levels.

Olson, Mary W.; Gillis, M. K. "Text Type and Text Structure: An Analysis of Three Secondary Informal Reading Inventories," *Reading Horizons*, v28 n1 p70-80 Fall 1987.

Suggests that IRIs should include both narrative and expository passages. Describes a study of several reading inventories indicating that some current secondary school IRIs have been constructed with some consistency of text types. No clear picture of text structure for the inventories was found.

Special Populations

Cheek, Earl H., Jr.; and others. "Informal Reading Assessment Strategies for Adult Readers," *Lifelong Learning*, v10 n7 p8-10, 25-26 May 1987.

Describes practical and readily accessible informal assessment strategies for evaluating adult readers. Includes (1) observation, (2) simplified reading inventories, (3) cloze procedures, (4) group reading inventories, (5) criterion- referenced tests, and (6) IRIs.

LaSasso, Carol; Swaiko, Nancy. "Considerations in Selecting and Using Commercially Prepared Informal Reading Inventories with Deaf Students," *American Annals of the Deaf*, v128 n4 p449-52 Aug 1983.

Offers guidelines for the selection and use of commercially prepared IRIs with deaf students. Modifications for deaf students pertain to: selection of the passage to begin testing, the criteria for oral and silent reading levels, and procedures for estimating students' reading potential levels.

Manning, Maryann; and others. "A Comparison among Measures of Reading Achievement with Low Income Black Third Grade Students." Paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1985. 26p. [ED 261 074]

Compares the results of different types of reading achievement measures for 58 low-income urban black third graders. Finds that correlations among all of the measures were moderate to high. Examination of teachers' judgments regarding reading book placement, as compared to test results, indicated that teachers underestimated students' reading ability and placements did not reflect test results.

Scales, Alice M. "Alternatives to Standardized Tests in Reading Education: Cognitive Styles and Informal Measures," *Negro Educational Review*, v38 n2-3 pp99-106 Apr-Jul 1987.

Discusses students with various cognitive styles and their inability to perform well on standardized tests. Notes that impulsive and reflective style students seem to do better on informal tests. Suggests a combination of standardized and informal testing for making educational decisions.

Sullivan, Joanna. "Differences in the Oral Reading Performance of English and Spanish Speaking Pupils from the United States and Venezuela," *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, v19 n4 p68-73 Sum 1986.

Compares results of 90 pupils in grades one through three, half English speaking and half Spanish speaking, on IRIs administered in their respective countries. Determines by analysis of variance whether significant differences exist between decoding errors of pupils in both countries.

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